Assignment of Land.

12. The area of land under occupation increased by 9,740 acres, mainly as a result of registry under the Puduval and special rules. The capital receipts from the sale proceeds of Government lands amounted only to Rs. 4·43 lakhs. The revenue under this head has been gradually declining from 1103 when it was Rs. 5·86 lakhs and 1104 when it was Rs. 5·47 lakhs. This is partly due to the diminishing extent of fresh lands available for cultivation and partly to the economic depression prevailing in the country. 1,013 applications or seventy five per cent. of the total number of applications from members of the landless classes were disposed of, 617 acres being registered in the names of 614 applicants. An area of 15,133 acres has been ear-marked for assignment to these classes, out of which an extent of 2,918 acres has been assigned to them till the end of 1105. A further extent of 2,615 acres has also been assigned to them from outside the ear-marked area. Pulayas, Sambavars, Parayas, Kuravas, Kanikars and Hill Arayas have come in for the largest share of the 5,533 acres already registered. An area of 234 acres was registered in favour of Ex-War Service men on concessional terms. The Neriamangalam-Pallivasal road having been completed, steps are being taken to survey and sub-divide into suitable blocks for assignment the lands on either side of it; and, in the meantime, the unauthorised occupation of these lands by speculative land-grabbers is being prohibited. The rules for the assignment of town lands have been revised. Provision has also been made therein to extend under certain conditions the benefit of the lower rates of assignment now fixed to those who have obtained registries under the rules of 1921.

Minor Irrigation.

13. In my address last year, I told you that the Government were appointing a small committee of officials and non-officials to investigate the problem of minor irrigation in the State and to suggest measures for its proper solution. The committe was constituted in the middle of March last. It has been requested (i) to investigate the extent of the minor irrigation facilities available in the different parts of the State and to submit proposals for their conservation, improvement and proper maintenance; (ii) to consider whether a separate agency should be appointed for the execution, maintenance and control of irrigation works, and, if so, what that agency should be; and (iii) to submit proposals where necessary to amend the existing Irrigation Regulation, III of 1072, and the rules thereunder in order to facilitate their pratical application. The Government expect to receive the report of the committee by the end of Meenam 1106.

Co-operation.

14. The year began with 1,738 co-operative societies and ended with 1,806 societies. For some years the Department has been pursuing the policy of consolidating the movement and has been intent more on the

improvement of existing societies than on the registrati on of new societies. In the course of my address last year, I referred to the predominance of credit societies which merely offered facilities for borrowing and urged the need for devoting greater attention to other aspects of co-operative work. Signs are not wanting that the importance of non-credit work is being recognised, for, of the 23 societies newly registered in the first five months of the current year, five are non-credit agricultural or non-agricultural societies. For some years past, the Registrar of Co-operative Societies has been urging the need for strengthening the field staff of the department and the office staff under him so as to cope efficiently with the additional volume of work resulting from the natural expansion of the movement as evidenced by the growth in the number of societies. Government have sanctioned the appointment of four additional temporary Inspectors (thus raising the number of Inspectors to 27) and of five peons, one permanent clerk and two temporary copyists. The salaries of the Registrar's Personal Assistant and the Head clerk of the Registrar's office have been revised.

Forests.

15. The post of Special Forest Settlement Officer was abolished from the 1st Thulam 1105 and the work in respect of settling the remaining tracts was re-transferred to the Dewan Peishkars and the Commissioner, Devicolam. An extent of 500 acres was disafforested from the reserves. A fresh area of 554 acres was planted with teak under the *taungya* system. The outturn of the year was 1·37 million cubic feet of timber against 1·29 million cubic feet in 1104. The gross revenue of the department, excluding refunds, rose from Rs. 16·05 lakhs in 1104 to Rs. 16·65 lakhs in 1105, and the expenditure fell from Rs. 8·56 lakhs to Rs. 8·22 lakhs, with the result that the net revenue rose from Rs. 7·49 lakhs to Rs. 8·43 lakhs, the highest on record. The Government are considering means for expediting the disposal of the accumulated arrears of *kudivila* claims.

Excise.

16. Last year I referred to certain measures of Government adopted to promote temperance and introduced in connection with the biennial abkari contracts settled from the beginning of 1104. I may mention the further progress made in working out the avowed policy of Government and in implementing the recommendations of the Excise Committee. The rate of duty on jaggery arrack was raised from Bh. Rs. 4-as 12 to Bh. Rs. 5-as. 2 per proof gallon; and the issue of arrack of 25° U. P. was discontinued, the issue strength being fixed at 30° U. P. and 35° U. P. For the current contract period, the annual rates of tree tax were enhanced, from Bh. Rs. 3 as. 12 to Bh. Rs. 4 for palmyra palms, from Bh. Rs. 7 to Bh. Rs. 8 for cocoanut palms and from Bh. Rs. 14 to Bh. Rs. 16 for sago palms. The number of arrack and toddy shops, which was 1,732 at the close of 1105, has been reduced by 85, or 4·9 per cent., from the commencement of 1106. The experiment of local option is still being continued in the Changanacherry Municipality and its result watched.